



תורת חיים Torat Chayim

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בס"ד

Naso

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This issue of Torat Chayim is dedicated to the soldiers of the IDF, the hostages, and the wounded.

Ramban on Our Parshah: Living in the Heights

Twice, our parshah uses the term *kadosh* (holy) to describe the *nazir* who vows not to consume wine, come in contact with the dead, or cut his/her hair (Bamidbar 6:5 and 6:8). But this journey into holiness seems to incur a spiritual cost; at the conclusion of the term, the *nazir* brings a *chatat*, or sin-offering (ibid. 6:14). What did the *nazir* do wrong?

No Sin

One view denies that this *chatat* atones for sin. According to a gemara (Keritot 26a), not every *chatat* is associated with sin; the korban may just reflect a transition of ritual states. It is named *chatat* only because it is processed in the same way that sin offerings are processed. [This may also apply to the *chatat* brought by a woman after child-birth, as described in Vayikra 12:6-8.]

Refraining from Pleasure

Another gemara presents a second idea. Rabbi Elazar haKappar taught, "Why does the Torah say that the *nazir* must bring a korban to atone for the sin he committed 'against a life?' Against whose life has he sinned?! It is because he pained himself by withdrawing from wine. (Bava Kama 91b)" [In truth, Rabbi Elazar haKappar made this statement regarding the *chatat* a *nazir* brings if he be-

came *tamei* illegally, but the commentators apply it to the *chatat* a *nazir* brings at the end of the term as well.]

Within this view, Hashem gave us a world of permissible pleasures, and a Jew is supposed to enjoy it. The Torah provided the *nazir's* framework for refraining from a particular pleasure because there are circumstances in which that is necessary, but even then the *chatat* reminds the *nazir* that this is not ideal.

Leaving the Heights

Ramban rejects both of those ideas, offering instead what he describes as *peshat*: The sin is in **leaving** the state of being a *nazir*. Becoming a *nazir* means ascending to a high level in serving Hashem; see Amos 2:11, which links the *nazir* and the *navi* (prophet) as ideal states. The *nazir* must now atone for abandoning that higher state.

But Ramban's philosophy should not discourage us from pursuing moments of great religious achievement. We cannot maintain the highest level at all times, and the *chatat* indeed reminds us that we have lost something. But to borrow from Alfred Lord Tennyson, 'tis better to have grown and lost than never to have grown at all.

Parshah Riddles for Kids (answers on the back)

Age 4-8: Which of these is a *nazir* allowed to drink? A) Wine, B) Grape Juice, C) Apple Juice D) Clam Juice ?

Age 8-12: On what date did they complete the Mishkan? See Rashi to Bamidbar 7:1.

Age 12+: What made the leaders of the shevatim special? See Rashi to Bamidbar 7:2.

Journey Through Tanach: Shoftim 5:20-31

Last week (5:1-19) we started Devorah's poem and saw her emphasize the value of volunteerism in the Jewish rebellion against Canaan. Some of the tribes volunteered to rescue the Jews who were suffering from the Canaanites, while others opted to sit out the battle. Hashem also "volunteered" to assist us. On the other side, Canaanite kings joined the battle even without expecting a share of the spoils!

Now we see Devorah continue in the same vein, and along the way she adds details to the account of the miraculous victory. She describes Nature **volunteering** to fight on our side, as the stars and rivers come to our rescue. As explained in the gemara (Pesachim 118b), the stars heated the armored soldiers, so that they entered the water to cool off and were swept away. However, Devorah curses Meroz, who did not **volunteer** to help; according to a gemara (Moed Katan 16a) Meroz is either a star, or a great warrior. (5:20-23)

Devorah then describes the **volunteerism** of Yael, again adding detail which did not appear in the previous chapter's account. She begins by saying that Yael should be

blessed *minashim ba'ohel*. Rashi explains that this means she should be blessed **among** the matriarchs, or that she should be praised **by** the matriarchs for saving their descendants.

Devorah depicts Yael giving the Canaanite Sisera milk in a big trough, perhaps to lull him to sleep. She then drives a spike through his skull, and Devorah describes Sisera collapsing "between her legs," using the phrase multiple times. A gemara (Nazir 23b) reads this as a reference to sexual assault. (5:24-27)

Finally, Devorah describes Sisera's supporters, demonstrating a contrast between the Jews and the Canaanites. Sisera's mother worries as he fails to return home, and women "comfort" her by explaining that he is likely assaulting women and pillaging. Devorah prays to Hashem that all of our enemies should fall as these did. After the poem, the chapter concludes with a declaration that the silent was silent for forty years. (5:28-31)

The 613 Mitzvot: #33 - Honor Your Parents, Part 1

The Torah's 33rd mitzvah, honoring one's parents, is frequently described (such as Yerushalmi Peah 1:1) as the most difficult mitzvah in the Torah. There is no limit on the efforts required to repay our debt to those who partnered with Hashem to give us life, and who devoted years of their lives to raising us.

This mitzvah is divided into two categories: *Mora* (Awe) and *Kavod* (Honor). *Mora* refers to displays of respect, such as not using our parents' seats and not contradicting them. *Kavod* refers to actions which actively provide honor, such as providing meals or dressing them. We will discuss *Mora* further in Mitzvah #212, Gd-willing.

According to Rambam (Hilchot Mamrim 6:3) and Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 240:5), support of one's parent comes from the parent's funds, not from the child's funds. [This is supported by the Talmud Bavli (Kiddushin 31b), but the Talmud Yerushalmi (Kiddushin 1:7) is less clear.] However, parents who are indigent have priority as tzedakah recipients, even before one's own independent children. (Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 240:5, 251:3; Shoel v'Nishal 2:110)

To be continued...

Israel's Chief Rabbis: Collecting Tzedakah Pledges, Rav Y. Toledano

Born in 1880, Rav Yaakov Moshe Toledano studied in his father's yeshiva in Tiberias. He joined the city council, headed the local Mizrahi branch, and corresponded with Theodor Herzl and Nachum Sokolov. He moved to Pekiin for four years, strengthening Jewish life and founding a school. During World War I, the Ottomans exiled the Toledanos among 800 Jewish Galileans who held French citizenship. Taking refuge in Corsica, Rabbi Toledano helped establish local Jewish institutions before returning to Israel.

Rav Toledano joined the Chief Rabbinical Council of Tangiers in 1926, and there he established a Rabbinical Court and a yeshiva. In 1928 he became head of the Rabbinical Court in Cairo, then Deputy Chief Rabbi of Cairo, and then Chief Rabbi in Alexandria. From 1942 to 1958, Rav Toledano served as Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv-Yafo; then he became Minister of Religion. He was awarded the Rav Kook Prize in 1956-1957. Today, the Religious Council of Tel Aviv awards "The Rabbi Toledano Prize" for outstanding Torah literature, in his name.

In Rav Toledano's day, Israeli tzedakah collectors would travel to Sephardic Diaspora communities, where local officials would designate sums for each household to contribute. If the households were not compliant, the collectors would enter people's homes to confiscate assets for payment. In *Yam haGadol* #59 Rav Toledano discussed whether this was halachically acceptable, given that an

ordinary lender would not be permitted to enter a borrower's home to confiscate collateral for a debt.

Rav Toledano noted a gemara (Bava Batra 8b) which permits taking collateral for tzedakah pledges, but that gemara does not mention entering a home. A stronger source could be a responsum of the Rif (Rav Yitzchak Alfasi), cited by the Tur (Choshen Mishpat 97). However, Rav Toledano suspected that the Tur had misunderstood the Rif.

The Rif wrote that if someone lends money to a powerful person who then refuses to repay the debt, he may enter the borrower's home "to know the borrower's hidden property... just as we say that one may take collateral for tzedakah, and for communal needs." The Tur understood the Rif to permit even **confiscation** of property from within the home, but Rav Toledano contended that the Rif only permitted **reconnaissance**, not confiscation. He noted that the Shulchan Aruch did not bring the Tur's ruling, and saw this as support for his read.

However, Rav Toledano noted that Rabbeinu Tam (cited in that Tur) explicitly permitted confiscation of property where it is not collateral, but actual payment of a debt. While this is a minority view, Rav Toledano ruled that it could be relied upon for the sake of supporting the communities that rely on these collections.

Upcoming Learning!

All classes are open to men and women and free of charge, unless otherwise noted

8:25 PM Shabbat June 15

Mishlei: The Original Pirkei Avot, Part 1, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, at Eitz Chayim

There is no **Fourteen Centuries** shiur this Sunday

8:45-9:45 PM Monday June 17 at Eitz Chayim and on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/medhal>

Halachah in Healthcare Settings: Kiddush and Havdalah with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

8:45-9:30 PM Tuesday June 18

Gemara Makkot with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, for men, at 693 Knollwood

Age 4-8 C: Apple Juice
Age 8-12 The first of Nisan
Age 12+ They were the overseers in Egypt who were beaten when the Jews did not make enough bricks

Answers to Parshah Riddles

Torat Chayim does not include the Name of Hashem but should be disposed of respectfully, such as in paper recycling.

To dedicate an issue of Torat Chayim, go to <https://eitzchayim.shulcloud.com/form/toratchayim.html>